

contrast between black Christianity as a negative force and the positive strength of Judaism in American ethnic literature. Avery states her belief that Afro-American literature often displays a lack of cultural identity due to the historical removal from the ancient cultures of Africa, and the damage of slavery and segregation.

Essentially the book does not recognize that despite all that has been done to blacks in America, Afro-Americans have maintained a strong and vital heritage. Afro-Americans survive as an ethnic group in American society through an inherent bond to life, group history, and rich tradition. Christianity is not synonymous with heritage for the Afro-American for black heritage and culture transcend specific religious boundaries. The influence of Christianity cannot be denied, but it should be examined in context as one of many angles in a multifaceted pattern of group experience.

In examining relationships between Afro-Americans and Jewish-Americans, Avery points to certain issues of our time as well as historical religious ideas which have divided the two ethnic groups.

Rebels and Victims is recommended for academic libraries. It will be useful, perhaps because of its failings as well as its assets, in provoking discussion of interdisciplinary ethnic studies.

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Salvatore J. LaGumina. *The Immigrants Speak, Italian Americans Tell Their Story*. (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1979). 209 pp \$14.95.

Salvatore J. LaGumina has been a tireless researcher, writer, lecturer and teacher in ethnic studies in general and in the Italian American experience in particular. His books include *Vito Marcantonio: the Peoples' Politician*; *Italians in the United States: A Bibliography*; *An Album of the Italian American*; *WOP: A Documentary History of Anti-Discrimination in the United States*; and *The Ethnic Dimension in American Society*. It was inevitable that his interests would direct him to oral history.

In *The Immigrants Speak, Italian Americans Tell Their Story* LaGumina has fashioned fourteen personal life histories that include miners, shoemakers, a poet, an artist, theater people, a social worker, a soldier, a lawyer and an entrepreneur. Through their recollections they have increased our understanding of the Italian American experience. Their stories, told in the first person, both dramatize and illuminate the role of ethnicity in the twentieth century. As LaGumina states, "These stories detail the lives of a people bridging two cultures in modern history."

The author's foreword sets the stage by providing basic background information concerning the Italian ecology and heritage. The institutions of *campanilismo* and *frazionamento*, are succinctly defined to illustrate the cultural baggage the *contadini* brought with them to America during the peak period of immigration.

The Italians were primarily a working class population and the Italian proletarian narrators poignantly describe the exploitation, low pay, long hours, dangerous working conditions, padrone system, sweatshops, and company towns. Aware of the poverty in Italy, these personal histories present the tale of downtrodden immigrants' dedication to hard work and their involvement in an emerging labor movement. One of them, Remegio Pane, an immigrant shoemaker laboring seventy hours a week during the Great Depression, helped to organize a union in which he served as secretary. He persevered to get an education and to become professor and chairman of Italian at Rutgers University where he remains today as a dean. Though these biographies concentrate on the urban northeastern section of the country, Bruna Pieracci, a miner's daughter, provides a rich description of the drab life in rural Iowa.

Glimpses of other phases of American life are depicted. Poet Joseph Zappulla is critical of the Italian American press because he claimed the Italian Americans did not read and did not demand quality journals. Zappulla himself wrote scripts for radio station WOV in New York City. In another autobiography, Julian Miranda relates one of the best accounts of the Italian American radio theater covering the years 1932-1950.

Ethnic pride is a constant theme of these personal histories. Pride of family and language and a sense of roots pervades their stories. The tragedy of Sacco and Vanzetti symbolized anti-Italian discrimination and was felt in the Italian communities. The triumphs of Fiorello LaGuardia were experienced by the Italian American population. Immigrant Giovanni Pinna, in relating his life in the Sardinian-Italian community in Port Washington, Long Island, stated he "left Italy to come to Italy."

These personal histories are uneven, however. Some of the autobiographies are vividly woven as in the case of Frank Tarallo whose tenure in the OSS during World War II was smoothly detailed, as was Saverio Fizzo's mining experiences. However, Clara Cirica Grillo's recreation of community life in Cleveland was interesting; but even though she is included in the chapter on "The Theater People," she provided insufficient information on theater life. In addition, many of the assertions made by Julian Miranda are tenuous, and at times his meandering takes him off the subject as he becomes preoccupied with his political views rather than his life story. Also, Elvira Adorno's description of her father's flag-making business is fascinating, but I wanted to know more about her career as a teacher and her contribution to the Italian Cultural Council which she founded and directed. Moreover and most important, a concluding chapter could have been included to summarize the substance of these personal histories. It would have dramatized significant currents of their lives and allowed for greater in-depth analysis. LaGumina has presented a generally effective narrative history of "ordinary" Italian immigrants. It is history from the bottom up, a people's story. In this time of quantitative computer-based studies, it is refreshing to read the personal histories of "real" people.

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